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Topics

Open Doors

Contra Justice

It sets a poor example for the conduct Americans expect of Nicaragua to have the Immigration Service harass a Nicaraguan exile who dares to criticize "contra" rebel operation.

Though the service denies it, harassment appears to be the purpose of a move to deny residence to Edgar Chamorro, a disenchanted former "contra." Mr. Chamorro's status came under review after immigration officials read an article he wrote for The Times's Op-Ed page. It accused the C.I.A. of blaming the rebels for mining Nicaragua's harbors. Mr. Chamorro was ordered to tell an immigration judge why he should not be deported.

The service says its files failed to note that Mr. Chamorro possessed a visa valid through 1987, information that has now been passed on to the State Department "for review." It also appears that Mr. Chamorro's sister is a United States citizen, which normally means a deportation hearing can be waived. But political exiles are not normally harassed for exercising the American right of free speech. If that point escapes the Immigration Service, let the State Department make it.